

Hammond



County of Los Angeles CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

September 1, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION REGARDING STATUS OF OVERALL NEW DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE SERVICE INTEGRATION EFFORTS AND ACTION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WHEN SEARCHING FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS WHEN A CHILD ENTERS THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

On July 18, 2006, your Board approved two separate, but related motions by Supervisors Knabe and Antonovich instructing the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to work with the New Directions Task Force (NDTF) to:

- Provide a report back to the Board in 45 days with a full update of its overall service integration efforts, including timelines (Knabe/Antonovich); and,
- Develop an action plan that strengthens the coordination and collaboration of the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Mental Health, Health Services, Public Social Services, and Child Support Services (CSSD), in searching for non-custodial parents at the point of entry of a child in the foster care system. (Antonovich/Knabe)

The motions were made in response to a highly publicized case in which DCFS recently located the parent of a foster child that had been making child support payments through CSSD for a number of years.

Staff from my office contacted DCFS and CSSD to obtain a synopsis of non-CAO or NDTF related efforts that have occurred in response to your Board's directives. To date, the following has transpired:

1. As result of a planning conference held on July 11-12, 2006 in Washington D.C., CSSD and DCFS continue to build on a series of collaborative strategies and actions for enhancing communication and coordination among the departments. Examples of these efforts include:

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- Creating a list of liaisons for CSSD and DCFS workers so that they have a point person that they can contact in each geographical area;
 - Convening a planning team, from representatives of targeted CSSD and DCFS offices, to: 1) clarify and lead implementation of a new referral criteria between the departments; and, 2) develop a training program for child welfare workers on child support and the new referral criteria;
 - Working with DCFS' Torrance office (efforts are underway to identify two additional offices) to pilot the new set of referral criteria; and,
 - Collecting baseline information on referral activity and the appropriateness of referrals for a sample of cases in offices targeted for training.
2. Discussions to continue exploring the feasibility of co-locating CSSD staff at Children's Court as a collaborative strategy have been scheduled.
 3. As directed by your Board, the Office of Independent Review (OIR) has begun to independently oversee a DCFS investigation into the actions taken by CSSD and DCFS staff in relation to the Melinda T. case. At the end of the investigation, the OIR will prepare a report on the findings of the investigation.

The Chief Administrative Office staff has also contacted the remaining NDTF directors to inform them of our intention to combine our joint response to the two motions into a single comprehensive report for your Board's consideration. This report will consist of an inventory of all NDTF service integration initiatives, as well as a plan of action for enhancing the coordination and collaboration of departments when searching for non-custodial parents at the point of when a child enters the foster care system. We plan on submitting this report to your Board no later than October 31, 2006.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Lari Sheehan of my staff at (213) 893-2477, or lsheehan@cao.lacounty.gov.

DEJ:LS
CP:os

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
New Directions Task Force Members
Office of Independent Review